



Lebanon Conservation and Agriculture Commission

Conservation and Agriculture Commission Charge:

To advocate for conservation and agricultural issues before non-profit agencies, civic organizations, municipal boards and commissions and residents; recommend lands for preservation; provide information and guidance on protecting natural resources and agricultural viability; increase awareness and promote the value of natural resources and agriculture; and serve as conduit between local farmers, government and non-farmers.

Tax deductible donations can be made to "Town of Lebanon Open Space Fund".

Fall 2014
Volume IV

Conservation and Agriculture Commission Activities

The Conservation and Agriculture Commission works to implement Lebanon's Plan of Conservation and Development adopted in 2010.

The Commission is involved in many projects and advises Town boards, commissions and residents on conservation and agricultural issues. The Commission also partners with likeminded organizations such as CT Farmland Trust, Joshua's Trust, and State and Federal agencies to meet residents' needs.

Major land preservation projects completed in the past year include the 356-acre Williams Farm located on both sides of Goshen Hill Road and on Trumbull Highway behind the Elementary School.

Also completed in 2014 was the preservation of the 157-acre McCaw Farm located on the east side of Lebanon Green on Trumbull Highway.

The Commission maintains walking trails to Commons Hill and the Five-Mile Rock (maps available online and in Town Hall).

The Town is currently working on multiple preservation projects including farmland preservation projects and open space projects such as assisting the State to expand Bartlett Brook Wildlife Management Area and the creation of a State park at Lake Williams.

The Commission seeks funds and advocates for property owners looking to preserve their land and is available as a resource on matters of protecting our rich natural resources and preserving agriculture!

State Celebrates Farmland Preservation on the Green

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture held its first-ever Farmland Preservation Celebration on Lebanon Green Sept. 20th.

The purpose of the celebration was to acknowledge the 300 farms preserved in Connecticut, representing 40,000 acres of farmland.

According to Connecticut's Commissioner of Agriculture Stephen Reviczky, Lebanon was chosen because it contains the greatest amount of preserved farmland in Connecticut and because

"few towns have taken greater steps to secure and promote agriculture as a major economic generator."

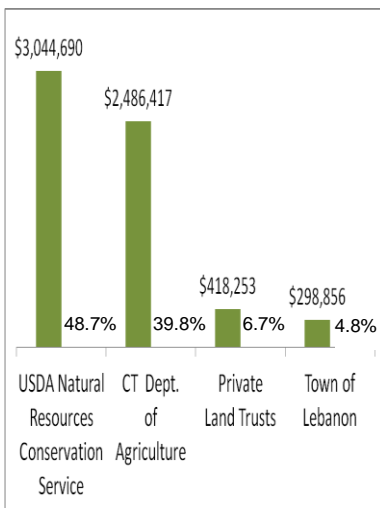
Lebanon's 5,000 acres of preserved farmland makes it the State leader in farmland preservation and represents more than ten percent of all preserved farmland in Connecticut. With more farms in the works for preservation, Lebanon has strategically placed itself at the center of Connecticut's farmland preservation movement.



Governor Dannel Malloy, First Selectman Joyce Okonuk and Ag. Commissioner Stephen Reviczky on Lebanon Green Sept. 20, 2014



Open Space Funding Sources 2006-2014



Investing in open space helps to protect community character and control property tax increases.

Since 2006, Lebanon's local share of the cost to preserve 1,700 acres of land has been about 5% or less than \$200 an acre.

Dennis Latchum was bestowed Lebanon's 2014 Conservation Award by the Conservation and Agriculture Commission for his many contributions to Lebanon's conservation efforts.

Williams Farm: PRESERVED

In 1958 Bob Williams purchased a farm on Goshen Hill Road. His son Donald worked hand-in-hand with his father over the years and they amassed over 600 acres and were Lebanon's largest (dairy) farmers.

Bob died in 2003 and Donald passed away in 2009, at which time farm ownership passed to eight family members.

In 2012 the family decided that permanently

preserving the farm and dividing the land into five parcels – some for family and some to be sold -- was necessary, and they contacted the Town for assistance.

The Town reached out to the CT Department of Agriculture and CT Farmland Trust for financial assistance.

The overall cost to preserve the Williams Farm was almost \$1.2 million. The Town

contributed \$50,000 or 4% of the preservation cost as did CT Farmland Trust, with the balance funded by the State.

Chelsea Williams, Don William's daughter, continues to farm the homestead with her husband Jason. Her brother Matthew runs a gravel operation on a separate parcel of land. The remainder of the farm was sold to Cushman Farm, part of The Farmer's Cow.

McCaw Farm (Friendly Acres): PRESERVED

In 1950, James and Arlene McCaw purchased a farm on Lebanon Green that had originally been owned by the Trumbull family. Their sons, Jim and Bob, worked the farm throughout school and continued to live on the farm and raise their families.

In 1957 Jim decided to work the farm fulltime, which he continues to do today. He raises beef

cattle and hay, and leases a small portion of the farm to Graywall Farm (part of The Farmer's Cow).

Jim and his wife Geri and Bob and his wife Maggie made the decision to preserve their family farm in 2011.

With financial assistance from the CT Department of Agriculture, CT Farmland Trust and the Hugh Trumbull Adams

Family Trust, the farm was preserved earlier this year.

The McCaw farm is the first to be preserved on the historic Lebanon Green. The Town is working with other families to assure that additional properties and views along Lebanon Green are preserved for future generations!

Lebanon Farmers Market

Lebanon Farmers Market has just completed its eighth season!

The Market is a true community event where in addition to purchasing local vegetables, fruits, cheeses, meats, eggs, honey, maple syrup, baked and prepared foods,

flora and fauna, and local artistry, neighbors meet to share good music, food and conversation and enjoy the sunshine.

The Market provides a venue where 20+ local farmers can sell their products in a welcoming environment in front of Town Hall.

Market members support the Connecticut 10% campaign to promote locally grown products. You too can take the pledge to spend 10% of your food and gardening dollars locally at www.buyCTgrown.com.

See you next June at the Market!

Open Space Funding Update

Lebanon's land preservation program began in 2006. Since that time the Town has set aside a total of \$420,000, of which \$300,000 has been expended to preserve 1,700+/- acres.

This investment represents 5% of the total \$6.2 million required to preserve these acres – with 95% of the funds coming from the USDA-NRCS, CT Department of Agriculture and non-profit partners.

Lebanon's investment allows it to solicit the vast majority of preservation dollars from these partners, all of whom require matching funds.

Landowners regularly approach the Town asking for assistance preserving their land and the Conservation and Agriculture Commission and Town staff are there to assist them.

The approved 2014 Town budget included \$100,000 to be used for land preservation.

The Town accepts tax deductible cash donations dedicated for land preservation. If you are interested in donating, please send a check made payable to "Town of Lebanon Open Space Account".

Lebanon's goal is to preserve at least 2,000 acres of land between 2011-2020. It is through our joint efforts that Lebanon will remain a unique, strong and special community!

Joshua's Trust: Preserving Open Space in Lebanon

Joshua's Trust (JT) is a private land trust founded in 1966 that has protected 5,500 acres in our region, including 510 acres in Lebanon. Some properties are owned by the Trust and others are protected by easements; both methods assure that those lands will not be developed in perpetuity.

Joshua's Trust covers 15 towns, including Lebanon, and is the largest land trust in New England!

Joshua's Trust is Lebanon's local land trust! Since the Town began calling on JT to assist in land preservation efforts in 2006, the Trust has always risen to the occasion -- providing technical and financial support on a myriad of projects.

In addition to monitoring several conservation easements in Lebanon, the Trust owns three properties – the largest being the 136-acre Pigeon Swamp Preserve. The Trust has also partnered and provided funding to the Town to help preserve the 101-acre Rechlin and 162-acre Anderson properties.

JT's Pigeon Swamp Preserve contains three miles of level trails that meander through a variety of habitats (marsh, swamp, forest and old pasture). There are also remains of an old house foundation, mill, dam and sluice on Pigeon Swamp Brook. A trail map is available on the JT website (joshuastrust.org).

Recently, Joshua's Trust recognized the Town of Lebanon by bestowing its 2014 Group Conservation Award to the Conservation and Agriculture Commission. According to JT President Fran Funk, Lebanon's preservation efforts have inspired other towns to plan for and invest in land preservation.

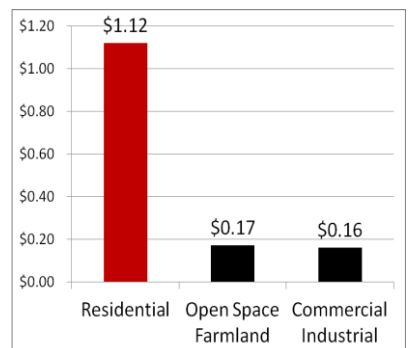
Joshua's Trust will continue to be an important partner in Lebanon's land preservation efforts. To join Joshua's Trust go to joshuastrust.org or call (860) 429-9023.

For specific questions about the Trust please contact Lebanon's JT Trustee Bill Ingalls at (860) 642-7349 or bingalls64@gmail.com.

OPEN SPACE and FARMLAND protects our pocketbooks!

Did you know that investing in OPEN SPACE and FARMLAND helps control property taxes?

According to Lebanon's 2007 *Cost of Community Services Study*, OPEN SPACE and FARMLAND require \$0.17 on the tax dollar for Town services rendered; whereas, residential development requires \$1.12 in town service costs (including education) for each tax dollar collected.



Municipal services costs per \$1.00 collected in local taxes by land use.

OPEN SPACE and FARMLAND pay more than their fair share in taxes and help subsidize municipal service costs required by residential development!

For a "*Lebanon CT Farm Country*" bumper sticker stop by Town Hall.

**LEBANON CONSERVATION &
AGRICULTURE COMMISSION**

579 Exeter Road
Lebanon, CT 06249

PRSR STANDARD
ECRWSS
US POSTAGE PAID
WILLIMANTIC CT
PERMIT NO #440

**POSTAL PATRON
LEBANON, CT 06249**

**Lebanon Conservation
and Agriculture
Commission**

Marc Lang, Chair
Jan Fitter, Vice Chair
Alton Blodgett
Emery Gluck
Keith LaPorte
Jon Slate
Howard Wayland
Oliver Manning, Alternate
Paul Trubey, Alternate
Toni Willard, Alternate

Philip Chester
Editor/Town Planner

PHONE: (860) 642-2006
FAX: (860) 642-2022
E-MAIL: ConservationComm@lebanonct.gov

ADDRESS: Lebanon Town Hall
579 Exeter Road
Lebanon, CT 06249

We're on the Web!
www.lebanonct.org

The Air Line Trail: COMPLETE

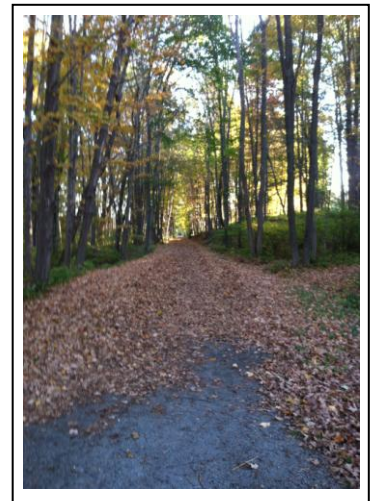
The Rails to Trails Committee is pleased to report that Lebanon's 7½ mile section of the State Park Air Line Trail is now complete and ready for visitors.

The southern section of the Air Line Trail runs from East Hampton center through Lebanon to the Willimantic River. The Trail is flat with a stone dust surface and provides a wonderful spot to walk, jog, bike or ride horseback. Several benches have been installed along the trail and picnic tables

are expected come spring.

The Air Line Trail project took a dozen years to complete and would not have been possible without the combined efforts of the Rails to Trails Committee, Public Works Department, DEEP, contractors and volunteers.

Be sure to take advantage of one of Lebanon's great outdoor experiences by visiting the Air Line Trail for an hour or the entire day! (See attached Trail Map.)



About the Conservation and Agriculture Commission...

Lebanon's Conservation and Agriculture Commission is a ten-member volunteer advisory board made up of town residents. Our mission is to protect Lebanon's rural character and natural resources.

Our role is to advise town boards, commissions and residents on ways to best protect Lebanon's valuable natural resources and promote open space and farmland preservation.

The Commission meets the first Monday of each month at 4:30 p.m. in Town Hall. Meetings are always open to the public and we look forward to hearing your ideas and feedback.

CT Department of Agriculture Support

Funding for this newsletter was provided by an Agriculture Viability Grant made possible by the CT Department of Agriculture through the Community Investment Act, 05-228.

In addition to supporting Connecticut's farmers, the Department provides funds to help support Lebanon's Farmers Market and to preserve Lebanon's farmland.

The Connecticut Department of Agriculture may be reached at (860) 713-2500 or www.ct.gov/doag.